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PLAN FOR BHAS FUTURE COMING SOON

Local, A3

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Berrien reports first COVID-19 death

Number of cases up to 32 in county, with 10 fully recovered

By ALEXANDRA NEWMAN
HP Staff Writer

Berrien County health officials on Monday announced the first death in the county from COVID-19.

The person was a man over the age of 70 with serious underlying health conditions, according to a news release from the Berrien County Health Department (BCHD).

He had been hospitalized at Lakeland Medical Center in St. Joseph.

U.S. Rep. Fred Upton on Monday evening issued a statement, identifying the man as Vietnam War veteran Walter "Bud" Baker.

"Today many a tear will be shed for our beloved Walter "Bud" Baker. He represented the very best of our community and our nation. During the Vietnam War, despite being shot 13 times in the chest, arm, and leg during action in Bien Hoa in 1968, he fearlessly fought to save the lives of his fellow patriots. He was rightly awarded the Distinguished Service Cross. His incredible courage, selflessness, and love of country was evident in duty and after he returned home, where he served as a chaplain and as part of Lest We Forget," Upton said. "... Sadly, this vicious virus did what even the ravages of war could not."

Dr. Loren Hamel, president of Spectrum Health Lakeland, also issued a statement. "On behalf of the entire Spectrum Health Lakeland team our deepest sympathies go out to the family and friends of this individual," said Hamel in the release. "We realize this is difficult news for our community and these are unprecedented and uncertain times for all. We have the deepest compassion for our friends and neighbors who fall sick, and for our team members who remain committed to care for our COVID-19 patients and fight this virus together."

The number of positive cases of COVID-19 in Berrien County rose to 32 Monday, up from 29 reported Sunday. Van Buren and Cass counties remained at four positive cases a piece.

The BCHD reports that 10 of the 32 positive cases have fully recovered from their symptoms. Many of the others are recovering at home.

Nicki Britten, health officer of the BCHD, is urging the public to continue to social distance.

"Protecting the health of our community and slowing the spread of COVID-19 is our top priority," she said.

Berrien County health officials have said they can not keep track of the number of tests that have been performed because the testing strategy through all of this has changed almost daily, and there are now many different labs processing COVID-19 tests.

"It's not really a helpful number for what's going on," Britten said at a news conference last week. "Tests are a limited resource and only those that are seriously ill are being tested."

Spectrum Health has reported that it is processing all COVID-19 tests at its lab in Grand Rapids resulting in faster turnaround time for test results.

In addition, Spectrum Health is still offering free virtual screenings for COVID-19 to those in Michigan who have symptoms and may be concerned they have the virus. Callers to the screening line, 616-391-2380, will be asked

See COVID-19, page A8

BEACH CRUISE

Don Campbell / HP staff

A skateboarder cruises past the sculpture Turbulence, by artist Denis Folz, Monday afternoon along Silver Beach in St. Joseph.

State COVID-19 cases rise dramatically

Michigan braces for shortage of hospital beds, workers and supplies

By MALACHI BARRETT
mlive.com

Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer announced several actions to increase access to medical supplies and bring more health care workers to the "front lines" of the state's ongoing battle against the coronavirus COVID-19.

Whitmer and Chief Medical Executive Dr. Joneigh Khaldun said there is a growing need for more personal protection equipment, hospital beds, ventilators and qualified health care personnel. The number of confirmed cases in Michigan has dramatically grown since the first cases were discovered on March 10, and Khaldun said there are no signs that the number of new cases discovered each day will drop any time soon.

"Our current models suggest we are likely several weeks away from a peak in the number of cases here in Michigan," Khaldun said.

"The goal of our response has been to slow the spread of the disease as much as possible, particularly so we protect our most vulnerable and so that we do not overwhelm our hospitals. Unfortunately, we know that several of our hospitals in the state, particularly in Southeast Michigan, are at capacity."

Whitmer signed an executive order Sunday to relax medical practice laws in an effort to bring more health care workers into the fight against the coronavirus. It temporarily suspends provisions in the state's Public Health Code to give qualified health care professionals more flexibility in treating COVID-19 patients and supporting doctors, at the discretion of health care facilities where they work.

The governor said her order gives hospitals more flexibility in managing physician assistants, nurses and other health care providers to address a

See CASES, page A8

Eau Claire couple resorts to Plan D for wedding

By JEFF SEIDEL
Detroit Free Press (TNS)

COLOMA — Shawna Phillips set up a card table in the backyard behind a shed, trying to find some protection from the cold, gusting wind. She put down a cloth for decoration and set up the wedding cake.

She quickly took off her coat and flung it at a fence, revealing a wedding dress.

"All right, let's get hitched!" Shawna said.

She looked determined. There was nothing that was going to stop this wedding: Not the fact that it already had been canceled three times because of the coronavirus pandemic, not the stay-at-home order, not even the 10-person limit of any gathering in Michigan.

"You want these?" Andrew Czuk, the 31-year-old groom, said while holding the wedding bands.

"No, keep them for now," Shawna, 33, said. "All right. We are ready."

It was 48 degrees with a gray sky when this wedding began Sunday afternoon in Southwest Michigan. They allowed only four people to attend: two witnesses, an ordained minister and a Free Press reporter. Chuck, their 2-year-old chocolate Lab, was designated the best man.

"Six feet apart!" Shawna said, referring to the social distancing measures recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The two witnesses were already about 15 feet back, and the groom started to move away.

"We don't have to be 6 feet apart," Shawna said, laughing.

They live together in Eau Claire.

"Come stand by me," she said.

Michelle McCoy, who used an online service to become ordained less than a week earlier, stayed at least that far in front of the bride and groom. McCoy considers Shawna a sister.

"I am honored to be part of your special day," McCoy said. "Today, we witness and celebrate the

See WEDDING, page A2

State opens up unemployment benefits to more workers

Self-employed people, contractors now eligible

By TONY WITTKOWSKI
HP Staff Writer

Gov. Gretchen Whitmer announced Monday there would be new programs for workers and some expansions on unemployment benefits for workers impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The governor, under the federal CARES Act, signed an agreement between Michigan and the U.S. Department of Labor to implement Pandemic Unemployment Assistance and Compensation programs that grant benefits to workers who do not already qualify for state unemployment benefits.

Workers affected by this change include those who are self-employed, 1099-independent contractors and low-wage workers who can no longer work because of the pandemic.

The agreement also increases weekly benefits for all unemployed workers by $600 a week for up to four months and extends

Tips on navigating unemployment

- To file an unemployment claim, please file online at: Michigan.gov/UIA or call 1-866-500-0017.
- A step-by-step guide to unemployment: https://www.miworks.org/post/filing-unemployment
- How to make an appointment with Michigan Works: https://www.miworks.org/post/michigan-works-moves-to-appt-only
- Weekly job list is posted here every Monday: https://www.miworks.org/job-search

See WORKERS, page A8

The Newspaper for Southwest Michigan

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Index

Classifieds	A6	State	A2	Puzzles	A5
Comics	A4	Nation	A2	Television	A5
Local	A3	Obituaries	A7	Weather	A8

Tomorrow's Weather
High 44 Low 35

6 50645 49085 0

Stuck-at-home Americans get robbed less often, but fight more

By EDVARD PETTERSSON, NOAH BUHAYAR, MICHELLE KASKE and MALLIKA MITRA
Bloomberg News (TNS)

With more than two-thirds of the U.S. population ordered to stay home amid the coronavirus pandemic, it's tougher for burglars to find an empty house to rob. But the cooped-up residents seem more likely to fight each other.

That's what crime statistics show in major U.S. cities where residents are spending almost all their time inside.

In Los Angeles, property crime was down 18 percent in the four weeks that ended March 21 from the previous four weeks. Calls for police services in Chicago have declined 30 percent for the month and crime in New York City fell almost 25 percent in the week ended March 22, compared with the week before.

"You know, you've never seen Fifth Avenue so open," New York Police Department Commissioner Dermot Shea said last week. "You never see crosstown streets so open. We saw an immediate drop in most categories, I would say, of crime."

The rapidly spreading infections from the coronavirus, with New York City as now the epicenter, have most Americans hunkering down. About 217 million people in at least 23 states, 17 cities and one territory were being urged to stay home as of Friday.

In Los Angeles, the number of burglaries and theft from motor vehicles, the most prevalent crime in the car-loving city, was down 24 percent. In areas such as Hollywood, car break-ins fell more than 40 percent, according to police. Burglaries dropped almost 20 percent in New York and rapes were down by more than half; there was one murder, compared with eight in the earlier week.

The changes in violent crime were less pronounced in other cities.

In Chicago, there's been a significant reduction in vehicle and pedestrian stops by police, Charlie Beck, the city's interim police superintendent, said at a press conference Tuesday.

"All of this indicates to me that people are doing what we ask," Beck said. "That they are staying home, that they are by and large creating good social distance, that our police officers are only focusing on things that have a direct impact on public safety and making sure that we all get through this together."

But with people stuck indoors enduring the stress of an unprecedented public-health crisis and worrying about jobs disappearing, domestic squabbles are rising.

Los Angeles-based lawyer Lisa Bloom said she's received dozens of calls in recent weeks from women who have been in violent confrontations with their boyfriends or husbands.

"And they are all coronavirus related," Bloom said in a phone interview.

In some instances, fights between couples erupted over the state's stay-at-home order, with people allowed to leave their homes only for essential errands or exercise. Last week, Bloom said, she got a restraining order for a woman who was beaten up by her partner after she complained he was going out for hours.

Julia Pickett

Gov. Gretchen Whitmer tells Michigan residents to stay at home, in her most sweeping order of the coronavirus crisis last week in Lansing.

Report: State schools will soon be closed for remainder of year

By LAUREN GIBBONS
mlive.com

Gov. Gretchen Whitmer's administration is preparing to close K-12 schools for the rest of the school year amid the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, according to a new report from Bridge Magazine.

Bridge Magazine reports an executive order that would let seniors who were previously on track to graduate do so and give schools their full state funding through the end of the school budget year as long as districts continue to pay teachers and other school employees is forthcoming as soon as this week.

The order will also provide for some form of remote learning for students for the rest of the school year, Bridge reported.

Asked to confirm the report Monday evening, Whitmer spokesperson Tiffany Brown declined, adding there are "no updates at this time" on the status of ongoing school closures.

Whitmer previously said the odds of school reopening this year were low during an interview on WWJ Newsradio.

"We are working diligently to come up with a plan to meet the needs of our kids," Whitmer said in the Friday interview. "Anyone who is watching what is happening globally with this pandemic knows it's probably very unlikely they're going to get back in school before the end of this year."

Following Whitmer's radio comments, Michigan Education Association President Paula Herbart said in a statement MEA leaders are "continually talking with the governor's office and lawmakers about what's needed in any plan for both students and school employees."

"Our primary focus is ensuring that any plan allows for local districts to work with our members to determine how best to proceed for students and communities," Herbart said in the Friday statement.

On March 12, Whitmer ordered all K-12 school buildings closed March 16 through April 5 as part of statewide efforts to slow the spread of coronavirus. That was changed to April 14 when Whitmer issued an executive order requiring people to stay in their homes.

Whitmer's orders apply to all public, private and boarding school buildings in Michigan. All public universities have canceled or suspended in-person classes, and the state is currently under a stay-at-home order.

LOTTERIES

Monday drawings

Michigan
Poker Lotto
JC-2C-9D-4H-8H
Midday Daily 3
5-1-1
Midday Daily 4
6-4-4-8
Daily 3
0-0-7
Daily 4
9-7-2-8
Fantasy 5
08-15-21-34-35
Keno
04-10-12-14-16-19-26-28-42-43-46-49-50-51-57-59-60-61-63-64-67-71
Mega Millions jackpot
$113 million
Powerball jackpot
$170 million

Sunday drawings

Indiana
Cash 5
01-07-09-14-20
Estimated jackpot
$100,000
Cash4Life
03-29-38-45-53, Cash Ball: 1
Quick Draw Midday
01-03-15-20-22-23-40-46-47-51-52-54-56-58-67-71-73-74-75-78, BE: 20
Daily Three-Midday
7-6-7, SB: 3
Daily Three-Evening
1-7-8, SB: 9
Daily Four-Midday
8-5-9-5, SB: 3
Daily Four-Evening
7-1-5-3, SB: 9
Quick Draw Evening
04-08-16-23-27-28-29-31-41-45-48-49-52-56-58-60-64-76-77-78, BE: 76

Illinois
LuckyDay Lotto Midday
05-06-10-30-34
Pick Three-Midday
8-0-2, Fireball: 7
Pick Three-Evening
7-4-2, Fireball: 3
Pick Four-Midday
2-2-7-4, Fireball: 0
Pick Four-Evening
6-9-9-4, Fireball: 6
Lucky Day Lotto
04-08-13-24-32

– The Associated Press

Coronavirus cases in Mich. prisons jump since Friday

By PAUL EGAN and ANGIE JACKSON
Detroit Free Press

LANSING — The number of coronavirus cases in Michigan prisons spiked over the weekend to at least 58, plus one parolee, with four Michigan prisons emerging as hot spots.

The Michigan Department of Corrections reported 20 positive prisoner tests for COVID-19 at Parnall Correctional Facility near Jackson, 16 at Macomb Correctional Facility in Lenox Township, and seven each at Women's Huron Valley Correctional Facility near Ypsilanti and Lakeland Correctional Facility in Coldwater, which has a geriatric unit.

The 58 prisoner cases is more than double the 24 cases reported on Friday.

Also, 12 Michigan Department of Corrections employees have tested positive for COVID-19, spokesman Chris Gautz said Sunday. No prisoners or employees who have tested positive for the virus have died, he said.

Gautz said further steps have been taken to restrict prisoner movements at prisons with larger numbers of COVID-19 cases.

But prison employees and in some cases prisoners have increasingly been expressing concern that the department has not been doing enough to keep prisoners a safe distance from one another.

"Programs, classes and other movement is being restricted at these facilities to help slow the spread," the department said in a weekend memo to employees, referencing a list of facilities that includes Parnall, Macomb, Lakeland and Women's Huron Valley.

Still, although Gov. Gretchen Whitmer canceled school for all Michigan students March 13, classes, as well as other group programs, generally continue for Michigan prisoners, though officials say they have taken steps such as reducing class and group sizes to minimize the risk.

"It's a balancing act," Gautz said Sunday.

"We continue to run programs that prisoners need in order to parole," he said. "Keeping the prisoners engaged and focused also helps keep staff safe. Having idle prisoners can be a danger."

Staff have also expressed concern that many prisoners who test positive for COVID-19 are being moved to a unit at Cotton Correctional Facility near Jackson – a prison that has yet to report any positive cases inside its walls.

Gautz said the unit at Cotton now housing prisoners with coronavirus is in a separate building and staff who have volunteered to work in that unit are not going into other prison units at Cotton.

Employees working in the unit are in full personal protective equipment, Gautz said.

"They even set up a separate staff shower and laundry area, free of charge, so staff can wash their uniforms and shower and go home in clean clothes, to lessen the worry about bringing anything home with them," he said.

"We also had those staff work 12-hour shifts to further reduce the number of staff needed to work in that unit. At the end of their shift, they place their work uniforms in a bag that gets laundered for them and they are given sweatsuits to wear home."

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WEDDING

From page A1

marriage of two best friends."

As McCoy read from First Corinthians, Chuck starting crying. Shawna petted his head, trying to calm him.

"Love is the ultimate commitment which challenges us to become all that we are meant to be," McCoy said.

It was beautiful and strange and surreal, at this time when nothing seems normal anymore.

"Your marriage will have joy and it will have challenges," McCoy said.

Challenges?

They have had to overcome countless problems, just to get to this point. They were determined to get married Sunday because it's the anniversary of their first date and the birthday of Shawna's late grandmother, a woman who was her best friend and meant the world to her.

Originally, 114 people confirmed they would attend the wedding and reception at a beach house on the shores of Lake Michigan. Those plans disappeared when the CDC advised against gatherings of 50 people or more.

So they went to Plan B: They would hold the wedding at their house with a small group of friends and family. Then President Donald Trump issued guidelines that called for Americans to avoid social gatherings of more than 10 people. Picking 10 people was impossible.

So they went to Plan C: They planned to drive to St. Clair Shores and get married by Josie Ries, Shawna's sister's mother-in-law. But after the number of cases spiked in metro Detroit, they were afraid to drive into one of the country's hot spots. And besides, there are travel restrictions.

So they went to Plan D: They got married in McCoy's backyard.

"Dear God, we ask for your blessing upon Shawna and Andrew as they celebrate their special day," McCoy said.

Andrew and Shawna met online and went on their first date on March 29, 2019. They went to a local bar and talked for hours, forming an instant connection. They've been together ever since.

"Let us remember all of the family and friends not with us today," McCoy said. "Keep them healthy and safe during this time of uncertainty."

During the ceremony, Andrew held Chuck's leash. Chuck cried and whimpered and suddenly slipped out of his collar. But Shawna deftly grabbed him and put it back on without missing a beat.

"This is a new beginning for both of you, and when you disagree, do it respectfully," McCoy said.

They said their vows.

"Shawna and Andrew have given themselves by solemn vows, the joining of the hands and the giving and receiving of the rings," McCoy said. "Therefore, with the blessing of God, I pronounce you husband and wife. Andrew, you may now kiss your bride."

They kissed as Andrew held Chuck's leash.

"It is now my pleasure to present for the first time, Mr. and Mrs. Andrew and Shawna Czuk," McCoy said.

"Yeah!" everybody screamed – and by everybody, I mean, the two witnesses and me.

Shawna burst out laughing, and Andrew looked down at Chuck.

"You cried that whole time!" Andrew said sternly.

Chuck wagged his tail.

"Oh my gosh, I'm so cold," Shawna said.

There was no walking down the aisle. No first dance. But that hardly mattered. They got married, had their first kiss and cut a cake.

"The dog kept crying," Shawna said. "And my grandmother's brooch falling off my bouquet. That was enough for me to keep myself laughing."

After they signed the marriage certificate, I asked them to stand next to the shed for a wedding portrait.

I used my phone.

"This is classier than a Vegas wedding!" Taylor Brink, one of the witnesses, said.

Everybody laughed.

How will America get through the uncertainty and stress of this virus? By this kind of spirit: By adapting and focusing on each other and finding the humor when things get a little crazy.

But there was one more lesson, important words we can all live by: Always tighten your best man's collar before getting hitched.

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LMC extends online instruction through full spring semester

College also revises other scheduled dates

By HP STAFF

BENTON TOWNSHIP — Lake Michigan College will extend online distance learning through the rest of the spring semester in response to the statewide shelter-in-place order.

The college originally transitioned its in-person, face-to-face classes to be temporarily delivered online beginning on March 23, with a plan for students to return to campus on April 14.

Now students will participate in online, distance learning through the duration of the semester, which ends on May 1.

The college has also adjusted its summer term schedule.

Originally summer classes were scheduled to begin on May 11. Now the summer term will begin on June 8 and end on Aug. 21. All summer classes will be delivered online through distance learning.

Course registration dates for the summer and fall semesters have also changed. Registration for veterans will open on Monday, April 27, and to all other students on Tuesday, April 28.

Some courses with essential hands-on components such as skilled trades and lab sciences were unable to be conducted entirely online.

To accommodate students enrolled in those classes, LMC plans to resume face-to-face classes on campus after the shelter-in-place order has been lifted. The adjusted summer term dates will allow time for making up those classes.

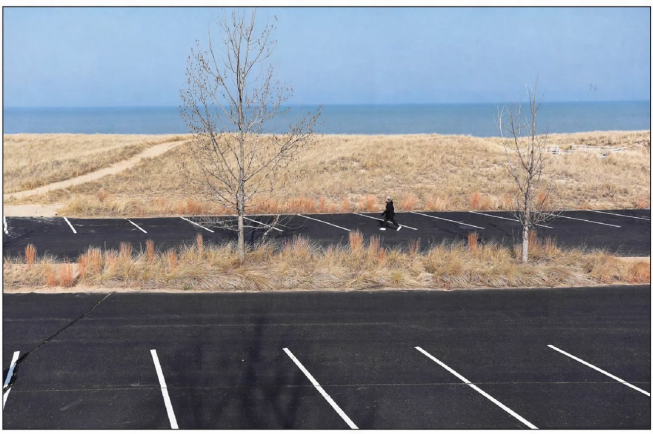
The college is still offering services to enrolled and prospective students remotely and continues to accept new applicants for the summer and fall semesters.

"We all miss seeing our students in person every day, but everyone has been handling the transition remarkably well," LMC President Trevor Kubatzke said in a news release. "We're grateful for everyone's patience and understanding and we're optimistic that these changes will ultimately improve our overall student services and course delivery in the future."

If Michigan's shelter-in-place order is lifted by April 14, the college still plans to open its campuses back up to employees and the general public while observing public health recommendations.

For more information visit www.lakemichigancollege.edu/covid19.

STROLLING THROUGH THE PARK



Don Campbell / HP staff

A woman walks along an empty section of Jean Klock Park in Benton Harbor recently. A "Stay Home, Stay Safe" executive order, currently in effect, allows residents to exercise outside of their homes as long as they keep a 6-foot distance between themselves and others.

State Rep. Isaac Robinson dead at 44; mother suspects COVID-19 related

DETROIT (AP) — First-term Michigan State Rep. Isaac Robinson died Sunday, according to this mother, who said she suspects her son's death could be related to the coronavirus. He was 44.

Former Rep. Rose Mary C. Robinson said her son died hours after being transported to the hospital for breathing problems and the family suspected he suffered from COVID-19, but he had not been tested for the virus that causes the disease. A cause of death was not immediately released.

Isaac Robinson, a Democrat from Detroit who did not attend the last House session March 17, was transported by ambulance early Sunday morning to the Detroit Medical Center hospital, said his mother, who also was a former Democratic representative from Detroit.

"I called EMS, they took him to Receiving at 6 a.m. and he was dead by 11," Rose Mary Robinson told Crain's Detroit, adding that her son had breathing difficulty in recent days, but resisted seeking medical attention.

"He wouldn't go to the hospital. I kept insisting the last three days," she said. "I kept saying, 'You should go to the doctor, go to the hospital.' Of course, he resisted."

Robinson's death comes days after state Rep. Tyrone Carter of Detroit tested positive for COVID-19.

Sarah Rahal / Detroit News via AP

State Reps. Isaac Robinson and Cynthia A. Johnson, D-Detroit, protest with community members in Detroit over the expansion of a treatment center in Hamtramck. First-term Michigan State Rep. Robinson died Sunday according to this mother, who said she suspects her son's death could be related to the coronavirus. He was 44.

For most people, the new coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough that clear up in two to three weeks. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia and death.

Isaac Robinson was a lawyer who was elected in 2018 to represent the 4th District in the Michigan House of Representatives, succeeding his mother in office.

Before working in private law practice, Robinson was a political director for a local Teamsters union.

He never married and had no children, according to his mother.

"It is with extreme sadness that I share the passing of Rep. Isaac Robinson who was a passionate advocate for his community and constituents," House Democratic Leader Christine Greig said in a release. "Our entire Democratic Caucus is devastated by the loss of our colleague and send our deepest condolences to his family and friends."

Gov. Gretchen Whitmer said Robinson "had a huge heart, a quick wit, and a genuine passion for the people." She expressed sadness about his death.

"He was a fierce advocate for Detroiters and people across Southeast Michigan," Witemer said in a statement. "He dedicated his career to ensuring justice and security for those he served, and the impact he had on his community will continue to be felt for years to come," Whitmer said in a statement.

BENTON HARBOR SCHOOLS

Online meeting set for April 7 for draft presentation

Joint committee will present plan to BH school board

By LOUISE WREGE
HP Staff Writer

BENTON HARBOR — April 7 is the new date for the draft of the long-awaited academic and financial operating plan to be rolled out that could improve the fortunes of Benton Harbor Area Schools.

The previous date in March was canceled due to Gov. Gretchen Whitmer ordering that all meetings be held remotely because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We're going to present the plan to the Benton Harbor Area Schools board and try to answer any questions they will have," said Deputy State Treasurer Joyce Parker, who chairs the BHAS Community Engagement Advisory Committee.

The special joint meeting between the advisory committee and school board trustees will be held remotely at 5:30 p.m., via Microsoft TEAMS Live. Instructions on how to participate will be posted at www.michigan.gov/engagecomm. Parker said the public will be able to see the presenters, along with a PowerPoint presentation she's putting together.

"I'm hopeful that we will be able to have some kind of public presentation at a later date, but it really depends on what occurs with the coronavirus," Parker said.

Also to be presented to school board trustees is an assessment of how the school district got where it is, with declining enrollment and test scores, along with more than $18 million in debt.

State officials suggested last May that Benton Harbor High School be closed at the end of the current school year to help the district with its high debt and decreasing enrollment and test scores. But after almost three months of tense negotiations, state officials hit the reset button and offered to help form and pay for the advisory committee.

The advisory committee started working on the plan last fall.

Parker said that after receiving feedback from school board trustees, the plan will be presented to state officials. If needed, she said changes will be made and approved by the advisory committee before it is presented, again, to school board trustees and state officials for final approval.

"What's most important is to try to plan for the upcoming school year," she said. "The sooner we get it to them, the sooner they can decide what direction they would like to take."

BHAS board President Joseph Taylor said he looks forward to seeing the plan.

"I'm sure they've done a yeoman's job with coming up with their ideas," he said. "The board will take a look at it and go from there."

Taylor said he's unsure if trustees will hold their regularly scheduled meeting on April 14. If they have other business to handle, he said they may just do it at the April 7 meeting.

Contact: lwrege@TheHP.com, 932-0361, Twitter: @HPWrege

Whitmer OKs $150M to fight pandemic, vetoes other spending

By DAVID EGGERT
Associated Press

LANSING — Gov. Gretchen Whitmer on Monday signed onto a $150 million funding package to fight the coronavirus pandemic while vetoing $167 million she said should be saved as Michigan confronts what are expected to be plummeting tax revenues amid the pandemic's economic fallout.

Just weeks ago, the Democratic governor and Republican-led Legislature had agreed to additional mid-year spending to fund their priorities after a budget impasse last fall.

"The world has changed since those negotiations, and we must react and change along with it," Whitmer told reporters while also announcing directives to restrict state departments' discretionary spending and to suspend hiring.

She blocked $35 million for a new program she had touted that would have provided financial assistance for adults age 25 and older to attend community college. Also vetoed was $16 million to partially revive Pure Michigan, the state's tourism campaign; $15 million to the Going Pro campaign, which helps businesses recruit students into the trades and other high-demand fields; and $37 million in earmarks, or "enhancement grants," for projects in individual legislative districts.

"It's too early to determine the exact impact on state revenues and knowing there is the potential for a significant loss in revenue, now is not the time to sign a bill for supplemental funding for anything other than dollars that can be utilized to help our COVID-19 response," Whitmer said.

She and legislative leaders from both parties issued a joint statement saying that to date, the state had spent more than $130 million to secure medical supplies such as masks and ventilators.

IN BRIEF

Animal group offering pet supply deliveries

STEVENSVILLE — A local animal rescue nonprofit has set up a service to keep pets healthy during the coronavirus emergency.

Paws of Hope is now running a pet food pantry in which a volunteer will deliver pet food and other supplies to the doorstep of those in need.

"While the crisis is evolving rapidly, we are learning that some pet owners in our community are in need of assistance to care for their pets," said Lynn Schlender, one of the volunteers for the group. "Anyway we can all come together and help our community is one of the positive aspects of this crisis."

In addition, the group has postponed its annual fundraiser, Bids for Barks, that was set for May 16 at The Mendel Center. It is now scheduled for Sept. 12.

For more information on Paws of Hope, to donate, volunteer or sign up for pet supply delivery, visit pawsof hope.org.

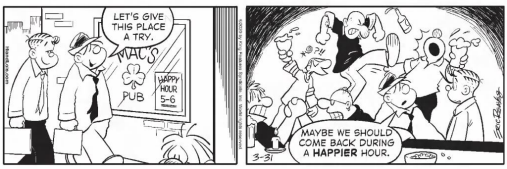
BEETLE BAILEY

I'VE HEARD OF PEOPLE LAUGHING ON THE OUTSIDE AND CRYING ON THE INSIDE
BUT HE'S THE FIRST TO SMIRK ON THE INSIDE!
GREG + MORT WALKER
3-31

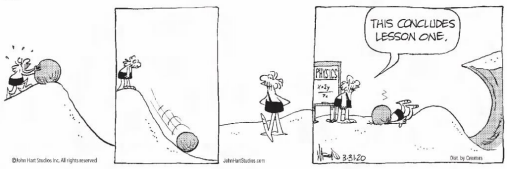
BLONDIE

BUMSTEAD, I'M TIRED. SO IF ANYONE ASKS, JUST TELL THEM I RANTED AND RAVED ALL DAY TO YOU
ARE YOU SURE BOSS?
I KNOW HOW MUCH YOU ENJOY RANTING AND RAVING AT ME
NO, IT'S FINE, BUMSTEAD
ON SECOND THOUGHT...
I KNEW IT!
3-31

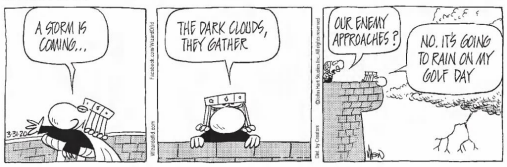
HI & LOIS



BC



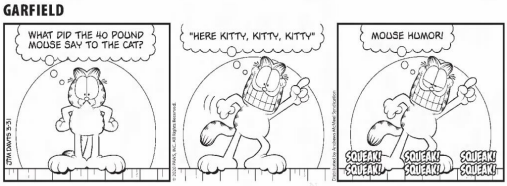
WIZARD OF ID



DILBERT

THE SECRET TO BEING A GREAT MANAGER IS HIRING PEOPLE WHO ARE SMARTER THAN YOU ARE.
THEN YOU HAVE TO TAKE CREDIT FOR THEIR SUCCESSES SO THEY DON'T TAKE YOUR JOB.
I ALSO FIND IT HELPFUL TO START RUMORS THAT THEY STEAL.

GARFIELD


WHAT DID THE 40 POUND MOUSE SAY TO THE CAT?
"HERE KITTY, KITTY, KITTY"
MOUSE HUMOR!
SQUEAK! SQUEAK! SQUEAK! SQUEAK! SQUEAK! SQUEAK!
JIM DAVIS 3-31

FORT KNOX

I HEARD YOU'RE CURSER GRANDMOTHER.
WHAT'S IT TO YOU?
I THINK IT'S TIME TO TAKE OUT A HUGE LIFE INSURANCE POLICY.
AND WHAT WILL YOU DO IF I GET ONE?
SIGN YOU UP FOR CLIFF JUMPING.

PICKLES

"GO AHEAD" I SAID TO MYSELF THIS MORNING.
"WEAR A SOLID COLOR SHIRT. IT'S A PRETTY COLOR AND YOU WON'T SPILL ANYTHING ON IT."
AND GUESS WHAT... I DIDN'T!
AND THEN I SAT ON A CHOCOLATE DONUT.
3/31

FAMILY CIRCUS

DENNIS THE MENACE

BABY BLUES

DAD, OUR SCHOOL'S SPRING CARNIVAL IS COMING UP.
UH-HUH.
THE MONEY RAISED FOR THIS FUN EVENT GOES TO BUY BOOKS FOR THE LIBRARY AND SUPPLIES FOR OUR UNDERFUNDED CLASSROOMS, AND...
HOLD IT.
JUST GIVE ME A DOLLAR AMOUNT.
THE COOL PARENTS GIVE FIFTY BUCKS

CURTIS

ALL MA, WHY DO WE HAFTA DO SCHOOL-WORK AT HOME?!
JUST BECAUSE THE SCHOOL IS CLOSED TEMPORARILY DOESN'T MEAN YOU STOP LEARNING, CURTIS!
I'M GETTING THE LESSONS ONLINE FROM YOUR TEACHER AND YOU GET TO DO THEM IN THE COMFORT OF YOUR OWN HOME
YEAH YEAH YEAH, CAN'T I STUDY IN MY UNDERWEAR?
NO!!
3-31

ZITS

SOMETHING WRONG, SON?
I GOT VAN-SHAMED BECAUSE OF HOW MUCH SMOKE COMES FROM HER TAILPIPE.
DO YOU THINK SHE'S DESTROYING THE PLANET?
I'D SAY SHE GIVES YOUR BODY SPRAY A RUN FOR ITS MONEY.
3-31

HAGAR THE HORRIBLE

MOTHER GOOSE & GRIMM

MUTTS

SALLY FORTH

YOU GOT A JOB OFFER?
JUST A MINUTE AGO. FOR A BOUTIQUE CREATIVE AGENCY.
IT'S A CONSULTING JOB, SO IT'S ONLY TEMPORARY. AND IT'S FOR HUMAN RESOURCES, WHICH IS NOT EXACTLY WHAT I WANT TO DO, BECAUSE I WANT TO CHANGE CAREER PATHS.
3-31
SO, ARE YOU GOING TO TAKE IT?
MAYBE. I DON'T KNOW. SHOULD I? I ALREADY SAID YES.

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Ben Sanders @HPBenSanders
Maxwell Harden @HPMaxwellHarden
Ben Spencer @HPBenSpencer

PRIME TIME TV

TUESDAY EVENING MAR. 31

	7:30	8 PM	8:30	9 PM	9:30	10 PM	10:30
ABC (7) (10) (41) (57)	Wheel of Fortune	The Conners	Bless This M.	mixed-ish	black-ish	For Life Safiya defies the prison board. (N)	
CBS (2) (3) (22)	Ent. Tonight	NCIS "Blarney" (N) (DVS)		FBI "Emotional Rescue" (N)		FBI: Most Wanted "Silkworm" (N)	
NBC (5) (8) (16)	Ac. Hollywood	Ellen's Game of Games		New Amsterdam (DVS)		Coronavirus Pandemic	
FOX (17) (22) (28) (32)	Modern Family	The Resident "Saints & Sinners"		Empire "Love Me Still" (N)		Fox 17 News at 10:00PM (N)	
PBS (34)	Steves' Europe	American Experience (DVS)		American Experience (DVS)		Frontline "Plastic Wars" (N)	
CW (25)	Big Bang Theory	The Flash Iris works with Eva to escape.		DC's Legends of Tomorrow		News	Seinfeld
MNT (39)	Family Feud	Chicago P.D. "The Silos" (DVS)		Chicago P.D. "Good Men" (DVS)		Chicago P.D. "The Forgotten"	
WCIU (26)	Mike & Molly	The Flash Iris works with Eva to escape.		DC's Legends of Tomorrow		2 Broke Girls	2 Broke Girls
WHME (46)	:00 Heartland	Heartland "Forest for the Trees"		Highway to Heaven "Time in a Bottle"		The List (N)	Celebrity Page (N)
WGN (9)	News	black-ish	black-ish	Last Man Standing	Last Man Standing	WGN News at Nine (N) (L)	
A&E	:00 The First 48	The First 48 "The Invader"		The First 48: My First Homicide (N)		The First 48: My First Homicide (N)	
AMC	Road House	Taken ('08, Action) Liam Neeson, Maggie Grace, Famke Janssen.		Taken ('08) Liam Neeson.			
Animal	My Cat	My Cat From Hell		My Cat From Hell		My Cat From Hell	
BET	Tyler Perry's Good Deeds			BET Star Cinema			
Big Ten	Illinois	BTN Basketball in 60		Big Ten Elite		MSU Classic	
Bravo	Vanderpump Rul	Vanderpump Rules		Vanderpump Rules "Prank Wars" (N)		Family Karma "Sari, Not Sari"	
Cartoon	Apple	Home	Burgers	Burgers	Rick	American	American
Cinemax	Date Movie	The Stepford Wives ('04) Nicole Kidman.		:35 Biloxi Blues ('88) Matthew Broderick.			
CMT	Last Man	Mom	Mom	Mom	Mom	Mom	Mom
CNBC	Shark	Shark Tank		Shark Tank		The Profit (N)	
CNN	OutFront	Anderson Cooper		Cuomo Prime Time		CNN Tonight	
Comedy	Office	Office	Office	Tosh.0	Tosh.0	Tosh.0	Tosh.0
Discovery	:00 Moonshiners	Moonshiners: Outlaw Cuts (N)		Moonshiners: Master Distiller (N)		Moonshiners "Rum Conundrum"	
Disney	Bunk'd	Bunk'd	Gabby	Sydney	Just Roll	Coop	Sydney
DIY	Maine	Building Off the Grid		Building Off the Grid		Building Off the Grid	
E!	6:00 Selena ('97)			Selena ('97) Jennifer Lopez.			
ESPN	To Be Announced					SportsCenter (N)	
ESPN2	Sports.	NFL Live		TBA	To Be Announced		
ESPNC	Baseball	MLB Baseball From Oct. 23, 1981.				MLB Baseball	
Food	Chopped	Chopped		Chopped (N)		Supermarket	
Fox News	The Story	Tucker Carlson		Hannity (N)		The Ingraham Angle	
Fox Sports	Wings	NHL Hockey Winnipeg Jets at Detroit Red Wings.					Wings
Freefrm	Ferris Bueller	The Blind Side ('09) Sandra Bullock, Tim McGraw. A well-to-do white couple adopts a homeless black teen.					
FX	Jumanji: Welcome	Ride Along 2 ('16, Comedy) Ice Cube, Kevin Hart, Tika Sumpter.				Ride Along 2 ('16)	
Golf	Skill	Golf's Greatest Rounds				Golf's Greatest	
Hallmark	Surprised by Love	In the Key of Love ('19, Romance) Laura Osnes, Scott Michael Foster.				Golden Girls	Golden Girls
HBO	:00 Ride Along 2 ('19) James McAvoy.	X-Men: Dark Phoenix		The Scheme ('20) A criminal enterprise targets NCAA basketball prospects.			
History	Oak Is	Curse-Island		Curse-Island		The Secret of Skin	
HGTV	Love-List	Love It or List It (N)		Unsella	Unsella	Hunters	Hunt Intl
Learning	People	Little People, World		Little People, World		7 Little Johnstons	
Lifetime	Grey's Anatomy	Tyler Perry's Madea Goes to Jail ('09) Tyler Perry, Derek Luke.				Tyler Perry's The Single Moms Club	
MSNBC	Decision	All In With		Rachel Maddow		The Last Word	
MTV	Teen OG	Teen Mom OG		Ridic.	Ridic.	Ridic.	Ridic.
NBCSCH	Short List	Pregame	To Be Announced				
NFL	NFL Total	NFL Mock Draft (N)		A Football Life		A Football Life	
Nick	Danger	Dylan	Sponge.	To Be Announced		Friends	Friends
NGEO	Life Be	Life Below Zero		Life Below Zero		Life Below Zero	
Oxygen	:00 Chicago P.D.	Chicago P.D. "The Thing About Heroes"		Chicago P.D. "Promise" (DVS)		Chicago P.D. "Snitch"	
Parmt	Shooter ('07) Mark Wahlberg.					Ink Master (N)	
Showtime	6:00 Platoon	Homeland "Threno-dy(s)" Carrie waits.		The Punisher ('04, Action) Thomas Jane, John Travolta.			
Starz	:06 After the Wedding ('19) Julianne Moore.			Outlander "The Ballad of Roger Mac"		:02 Drunk Parents ('19)	
STZENC	6:59 The Amityville Horror ('79) James Brolin.			Escape From Alcatraz ('79) Clint Eastwood, Patrick McGoohan.			
SyFy	The Twilight Zone	The Twilight Zone	The Twilight Zone	The Twilight Zone	The Twilight Zone	The Twilight Zone	The Twilight Zone
TBS	Big Bang Theory	Big Bang Theory	Big Bang Theory	Big Bang Theory	Big Bang Theory	Big Bang Theory	Miracle Workers
TCM	Take Me Out ('47) Betty Grable.	The Shocking Miss Pilgrim ('47) Betty Grable.		:45 Adventure in Baltimore ('49) Robert Young.			
TMC	Double Team	Total Recall ('90) Arnold Schwarzenegger, Rachel Ticotin.				The Terminator ('84)	
TNT	Reacher	London Has Fallen ('16, Action)				Geostorm	
Travel	Ghost	Ghost Adventures (N)				Portals to Hell (N)	
TV Land	Andy G.	Raymond	Raymond	Raymond	Raymond	Two Men	Two Men
USA	Biggest Loser	7:55 The Biggest Loser (N)		The Biggest Loser "Finale" ((F)) (N)			Chrisley Knows
VH1	Cannon	Wild/Out	Cannon	Cannon	Cannon	Cannon	Cannon
WGN-A	:00 Black Hawk Down ('01, War) Josh Hartnett, Ewan McGregor, Tom Sizemore.					Black Hawk Down ('01)	

Revenge on cheating fiance is delivered on wedding day

DEAR ABBY: This is an open letter to all those women who write to you knowing their men cheated on them and then ask, "Should I marry him?" In their hearts they already know the answer; they just want YOU to tell them "NO!"

My mother saw my fiance's car around town, parked at various churches and parking lots. He parked there so I wouldn't see his car at "the other woman's" house. Well, I showed up unexpectedly at his place one night and saw them both asleep in his bed. In a way, I felt relieved.

I knew I had to do something. I immediately canceled everything, but had the wedding invitations printed and gave them to his mom and sister to send out "right away." When the big day arrived, I sat across the street in Dad's car with my mom, watching as only HIS side of the family showed up at the vacant church. The note on the door read: "Stay with 'Jazmine.' You two deserve each other! Now tell your family what you did."

I explained everything to my parents an hour later over dinner at the restaurant where we were supposed to have had our reception. We were all relieved the wedding was canceled. We laughed so much, and we reviewed all the signs that my mom tried to show me that I had ignored.

So don't get mad, ladies. Do what I did – dry your tears and get even. – Never Looked Back

DEAR NEVER: Love is blind, and you should have listened to your mother. You're lucky you found out in time and didn't marry your faithless fiance. While I don't normally recommend revenge, I think in this case, the man had it coming.

DEAR ABBY: I am 52 years old and have experienced chronic fatigue (from Lyme and Epstein-Barr) most of my adult life. Four years ago, I discovered a wonderful medical practitioner and, by adhering to her protocol, regained such improved health that I began volunteering with a local organization. Due to a recent setback, however, fatigue has prevented me from volunteering, and my absence has been noticed.

Although I am usually a private person, I decided to divulge my health issues to the leader so he wouldn't think I was unhappy with my duties. He then began asking if I had tried various health products and remedies to the point where I felt I was on trial and defending myself. In the past, before I received an accurate diagnosis, some family members and physicians doubted the validity of my illness, so I am sensitive to being questioned.

Over the years, I have sought treatment from various sources, from local health stores to nationally recognized hospitals, and I don't appreciate advice from healthy armchair experts. I also don't like being questioned or doubted. Did I set myself up by disclosing my health issues, or should I have remained polite but vague? – Survivor In The East

DEAR SURVIVOR: In a sense, yes, you did set yourself up by disclosing the reason for your absence. The medical conditions from which you suffer were poorly understood years ago, and many people – medical personnel included – were under the impression that their patients' problems were all in their heads. Please try to be less defensive where this person is concerned. From my perspective, he was only trying to be helpful.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Jeanne Phillips
Dear Abby

It's worth groveling to rejoin graduate program

Adapted from an online discussion.

DEAR CAROLYN: I dropped out of my grad program with only a few credits to go because I felt the workload was sucking all the fun out of my life and forcing me to miss some fun times with friends.

Well, about six months later, it seems the Happy Hour Every Night phase has abruptly ended for my whole friend group, and now I feel like an idiot for letting my momentum drift away and not just finishing my education when I was that close.

I should definitely grovel my way back into my program, but every time I think of doing that, I get stuck on what a loser I'm going to sound like when I explain that I left to play with my friends. Can you help me get past that obstacle?– Made a Mistake

MADE A MISTAKE: "I left for personal reasons, and I'd like to return." Growing up isn't pretty. But, it's good.

Plus, the sound-like-a-loser potential isn't diminishing with time, it's amassing armies, so the sooner you get on it the better.

It's also lifelong, alas. Assuming my sense of time is accurate, I am unable to go more than a month or so without an, "I can't believe I have to freaking admit this about myself," moment of some magnitude or another. My goal in life is not to erase them, but instead to keep them small. Ish.

READERS' THOUGHTS: Being able to recognize that you need to change course in life is itself a worthwhile skill, especially in the context of having to admit a mistake and try to change back. In other words, you're not a loser – just having the realization you had is an achievement. Good luck.

■ My sister briefly dropped out of undergrad for a similar reason, and was able to return after a semester with no drama. Lots of people have gaps in their education due to a variety of reasons, and it's a lot more common than you think. If anything, it teaches you to appreciate it more. Don't let temporary shame prevent you from finishing something you clearly want. P.S. When I was in grad school, I was completely tempted to do the same thing. I occasionally wish I'd spent more of my early 20s playing. But now, in my mid-30s, I'm glad for the education and the options/income it provides for me now, and I suspect you will, too.

■ As a faculty member in a department with a graduate program, I can say we LOVE when students come back and graduate. It's professionally fulfilling, but also the graduation numbers matter for our accreditation. In a small program, every student matters! And honestly, we've heard all the reasons – and non-reasons – for dropping out that you can imagine.

■ Do it. Ask, grovel, inquire, whatever. Do it now before those credits start to expire. I did all the coursework for a master's degree and never got a thesis off the ground … and the time I spent berating myself added up to years and suddenly those credits were gone. Obviously I still retained the knowledge and experience … but employers don't tend to understand what "graduate coursework completed" means on a résumé. Go. Ask. Finish.

Email Carolyn at tellme@washpost.com, follow her on Facebook at www.facebook.com/carolyn.hax or chat with her online at noon each Friday at www.washingtonpost.com.

Carolyn Hax

CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 Fertile soil
5 Who, in Lille
8 Playful bark
11 Actor Alan —
12 Footed vase
13 Cashbox
15 Door feature
17 Yucatan native
18 Fragrant necklace
21 Clock watcher
24 Always, to Whitman
25 — you kidding?
26 Ewe's plaint
27 Roomier
30 Types
32 Extinct bird
33 Moby Dick's foe
37 Strive for
38 Fasten temporarily
39 Monument Valley sight
40 Fermenting agents
43 Bird beak
44 Bout ender
47 Actress — Delaney
48 Evaluate
50 Seafood tidbit
52 Bikini top
53 Unhinged
54 Regard as perfect
59 French state
60 No, to a laird
61 Waiter's burden
62 Baja loot
63 Economic ind.
64 Wise one

DOWN
1 Splash against
2 Bravo, in Spain
3 Sugary drink
4 Vermont tree
5 Je ne sais —
6 Website
7 Lacking refinement
8 $$ dispensers
9 Ranch rope
10 Radio — (toy company)
14 Stow cargo
16 Spaghetti seasoner
20 Umbrage
21 Heron kin
22 Broad valley
23 Fish habitat
24 "I" trouble?
28 Causing to become worse
29 Crash into
31 Firmament
34 Egg-layers
35 On the briny
36 Newborn
41 Just scrape by
42 First name in cheesecake
44 Decorated tinware
45 Temple city of Japan
46 Wilde or de la Renta
49 De-ices the roads
51 Oz canine
52 Go off, as an alarm
55 Aykroyd or Marino
56 A Gershwin
57 Zig's opposite
58 Watch carefully

Answer to Previous Puzzle

A	M	B	O		G	O	O		B	U	N	
L	E	A	P		A	R	M	S		O	N	A
E	R	N	E		L	A	I	T		R	I	G
	V	E	R	S	A		T	A	R	O	T	S
	A	H	S			G	O	N	E			
I	R	I	S	H		S	T	E	M			
M	I	A		E	P	I	D	E	M	I	C	
P	O	N	I	E	S	U	P		A	V	E	
		R	O	A	D		S	P	R	E	E	
	B	L	O	C			O	R	E			
P	R	U	N	E	S		S	T	I	L	L	S
R	U	G		N	O	R	T	H		E	D	
E	T	E		E	R	I	K		E	B	A	Y
P	E	R		E	P	A		D	O	M	E	

JUMBLE

Unscramble these Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

NPTEI

ULYOS

ELVARB

COLAAN

You have so many great locations for your home.
How about by the course?
I like the cul-de-sac.
WHEN ASKED HOW MANY HOME SITES WERE LEFT, SHE SAID THEY HAD ----.

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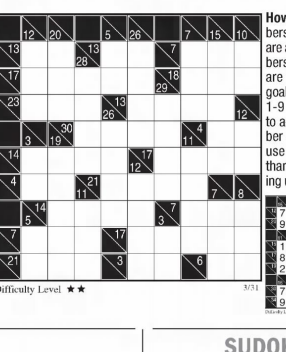
Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: VENOM HUMOR WEAKEN CANDID
Answer: When the tourists used Sydney's metro to get around, they were — DOWN UNDER

KAKURO



How to play: Numbers above the slash are across clues; numbers below the slash are down clues. The goal is to enter digits 1-9 in the white cells to add up to the number clues. You cannot use any digit more than once when adding up to a clue.

Difficulty Level ★★

3/31

BRIDGE

Elbert Hubbard said, "A failure is a man who has blundered, but is not able to cash in on the experience."

A bridge player should cash in when an opponent blunders. That happened in today's deal.

In the auction, South was a tad worried about spades when he rebid two no-trump, but there wasn't anything else he could do. North wondered if they were missing a slam, but even five clubs would have failed if West had led a diamond.

Against three no-trump, West led the spade queen. Declarer saw eight top tricks (two spades, three hearts and three clubs) and no problems. He won with the spade king, played a club to his ace and returned a club. When West discarded a discouraging heart three, South still wasn't concerned. He played low from the board and let East take his club trick. What did East do next?

It looked as though the defenders had to take four diamond tricks now. If West had K-Q-x-x, K-10-8-x or K-10-7-x, the suit could be run.

Accurately, East switched to the diamond jack. West, after capturing South's queen with his king, returned the diamond six to East's ace. Now the diamond-two return defeated the contract, West having the 10-7 hovering over South's 8-5.

Well defended, but did South have a better line of play?

North 03-31-20
♠ A K 6
♥ K 2
♦ 9 4
♣ K Q 8 6 3 2

West
♠ Q J 10 9 8
♥ 9 8 3
♦ K 10 7 6
♣ J

East
♠ 7 4
♥ J 10 7 5
♦ A J 3
♣ 10 7 5 4

South
♠ 5 3 2
♥ A Q 6 4
♦ Q 8 5 3
♣ A 9

Dealer: South
Vulnerable: Neither

South	West	North	East
1♦	Pass	2♣	Pass
2NT	Pass	3NT	All Pass

Opening lead: ♠ Q

Of course he did! He shouldn't have given the defenders a chance. If he had won trick one in the dummy and played a club to the nine, he would have been safe. With West on lead, the defenders couldn't have taken four diamond tricks.

SUDOKU

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★☆☆☆☆

			9	5	3	6		7
		9	8		1			
	8		4		6	9	5	1
8				6	9	1		5
	1			8			6	
5		6	1	4				8
1	6	8	2		7		4	
			6		8	7		
9		2	5	3	4			

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How to play: Complete the grid so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains every digit from 1 to 9.

PREVIOUS SOLUTION

7	8	4	3	1	5	9	2	6
1	2	9	7	6	8	5	3	4
3	5	6	9	2	4	8	1	7
5	9	3	2	7	1	4	6	8
2	1	7	4	8	6	3	5	9
4	6	8	5	3	9	1	7	2
9	3	1	6	4	2	7	8	5
8	4	2	1	5	7	6	9	3
6	7	5	8	9	3	2	4	1

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HOROSCOPE

By EUGENIA LAST

TUESDAY, MARCH 31
Recognize the possibilities and find out what it will take to reach your destination of choice. It's time to stop dreaming and to start pursuing your goals. Added discipline will give you the push you need to finish what you start. Channel your energy into getting things done.

ARIES (March 21-April 19) Try to get along with your peers. Build friendships, but don't get intimately involved with a co-worker. Use your skills masterfully and your intelligence to gain respect and support.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20) Get out and mingle. Don't be surprised if someone from your past has his or her eye on you. Be careful: He or she probably hasn't changed much.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20) If you make waves, expect to deal with the consequences. Accept the inevitable and get on with your life. Say what's on your mind and don't mince words or be gullible.

CANCER (June 21-July 22) Consider what makes you tick, and don't be afraid to try something new. You are in a creative cycle and should follow your heart and dreams. Romance is encouraged.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22) Don't annoy someone close to you. Being sensitive to the needs of others will help you avoid an emotional impasse. Extravagance and indulgence will lead to financial problems.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) Share your thoughts and feelings to get what you want. If you expand a plan and improve your skills and knowledge, you'll achieve the lifestyle you desire.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23) You'll tend to take on too much. Your empathetic nature will make it difficult to say no. Consider the emotional cost involved before you agree to something compromising.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 22) Your intellectual charm will win favors from people who can help you get ahead. Use your talent strategically to not only voice your opinion, but to bring about positive change.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23-Dec. 21) Verify any information offered to you before you make a decision. Stick close to home and to people you know you can trust. Emotional manipulation will leave you in a vulnerable position.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) Separate business from pleasure. Look for a unique way to promote an old idea. Be careful not to exhaust yourself mentally, physically or emotionally. Aim to ease stress, not to compound it.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 19) Work diligently to reach your objective. Avoid situations that could tie up your time with unnecessary chatter. Put your needs first, and walk away from stressful or unpredictable situations.

PISCES (Feb. 20-March 20) Financial self-deception will cause problems. Think before you make an expenditure you can't justify. Help yourself before giving your time, money or services to others.

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If you wish to reply to a box number and NOT have your letter sent to certain firms, then begin your e-mail with any company(s) where you do not wish to apply. Then include the Herald-Palladium box address as shown above.

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Boxes are reserved for 30 days after last day of ad publication. The charge is:
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When readers respond to your ad via e-mail, we will forward them to you immediately if you provide us with an e-mail address or we will print and handle them in the manner that you request.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

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Jim Cole / AP

Tomie dePaola poses with his artwork in his studio in New London, N.H. The beloved children's author and illustrator has died at the age of 85. DePaola delighted generations with tales of Strega Nona, the kindly and helpful old witch in Italy. His literary agent says dePaola died Monday from surgery complications after taking a bad fall last week.

'Strega Nona' author and artist Tomie dePaola is dead at 85

By KATHY MCCORMACK
Associated Press

CONCORD, New Hampshire — Tomie dePaola, the prolific children's author and illustrator who delighted generations with tales of Strega Nona, the kindly and helpful old witch in Italy, died Monday at age 85.

DePaola died at the Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center in Lebanon, New Hampshire, according to his literary agent, Doug Whiteman. He was badly injured in a fall last week and died of complications following surgery.

He worked on over 270 books in more than half a century of publishing, and nearly 25 million copies have been sold worldwide and his books have been translated into more than 20 languages.

Author Lin Oliver mourned his loss, tweeting that "He was a creator of beauty and a beloved friend." New Hampshire Governor Chris Sununu issued a statement, praising dePaola as "a man who brought a smile to thousands of Granite State children who read his books, cherishing them for their brilliant illustrations."

Strega Nona, his most endearing character, originated as a doodle at a dull faculty meeting at Colby Sawyer College in New London, New Hampshire, where dePaola was a member of the theater department. The first tale was based on one of his favorite stories as a child, about a pot that keeps producing porridge. "Strega Nona: An Original Tale," which came out in 1975, was a Caldecott finalist for best illustrated work. Other books in the series include "Strega Nona's Magic Lessons" and "Strega Nona Meets Her Match."

Reflecting on her popularity, dePaola told The Associated Press in 2013, "I think it's because she's like everybody's grandmother. She's cute, she's not pretty, she's kind of funny-looking, but she's sweet, she's understanding. And she's a little saucy, she gets a little irritated every once in a while."

DePaola said he put Strega Nona in Calabria, in southern Italy, because that's where his grandparents came from.

He said over the years, the visualization of Strega Nona – who grew out of his drawing of Punch from the commedia dell'arte – became more refined. But his liberal use of color and folk art influences in her stories were a constant. After saving her village from being flooded with pasta from a magic pot by her assistant, Big Anthony, Strega Nona went on to star or play a supporting role in about a dozen more books.

"I remember laughing at the pictures of Big Anthony, the townspeople, and even cute little Strega Nona," wrote one of his many fans in 2013, a woman who recalled her mother reading the book to her growing up. "She is ingrained in my childhood ... I hope to read Strega Nona to my kids one day."

In 2011, dePaola received a lifetime achievement award from the American Library Association.

"Tomie dePaola is masterful at creating seemingly simple stories that have surprising depth and reflect tremendous emotional honesty," the committee chair Megan Schliesman said at the time. "They have resonated with children for over 40 years."

At age 4, dePaola knew he was going to be an artist and author – and he told people so. He received a lot of encouragement from his family. "They gave me half of the attic for my 'studio.' Now, how neat is that?" he said.

His family, in turn, became central characters in a number of his autobiographical books, such as "26 Fairmont Avenue," about growing up in Connecticut during the Great Depression, and "The Art Lesson," about reaching a compromise with his art teacher on drawing in class. The former received a Newbery Honor Award in 2000.

DePaola wrote about doodling on his bedsheets and on his math work in second grade, telling his teacher he wasn't going to be an "arithmetic-er."

Many of his books bring to life folktales, legends, and spirituality – he often incorporated images of a white dove among the pages. Christmas, his favorite holiday, was a popular subject of many of his works exploring traditions of the season, and offered some storylines for Strega Nona.

In 2013-2014, dePaola had two exhibitions at Colby-Sawyer College, "Then," and "Now." The first showed his early artistic efforts, his formative years at the Pratt Institute and his work, influenced by Fra Angelico and George Roualt, among others; the second came out shortly after dePaola turned 80 and it focused on his more recent artwork.

"Even though I love doing my books and I try to be as creative as possible, there's always a restriction," he said in 2013. "I have to please other people, I have to please my art director, my editor, and then there's all the public to please. Some of the books I've considered my best artistic personal accomplishments aren't necessarily the books that appeal to children. And that's OK."

DePaola spent much of time working in his 200-year-old barn in New London, which houses his studio and library. It includes wall niches displaying folk art and a corner with a chair facing a small altar, where he meditated. More Native American, Mexican and early American folk art decorated his nearby home.

DePaola received many letters through the years from children with questions about his life and books, and he often took the time to chat with them at book signings and other events. It was always important to him to keep that voice active.

"I just keep the inner critic," he said in an interview. "Don't let the little 4-year-old get jaded. I listen to him. He stands beside me and says, 'No, I don't like that.'"

OBITUARIES

Donald Jerrold Skorupa Sr.

May 3, 1930 – March 28, 2020

Donald Jerrold Skorupa Sr., 89, of Three Oaks passed away on Saturday, March 28, 2020, at Hanson Hospice Center, Stevensville, in the care of his family.

A private family gathering was held and a public memorial service will be announced later. Memorials may be given to Faith United Methodist Church, P.O. Box 414, Bridgman, MI 49106 or Harbor Country Food Pantry, 301 N. Elm St., Three Oaks, MI 49128.

Donald was born Saturday, May 3, 1930, in Stevensville, the son of the late Thomas and Esther (Siemon) Skorupa. He married Phyllis Ann Smith on Jan. 9, 1954. Donald served in the U.S. Army in Alaska during the Korean conflict and was a member of the American Legion Post 331. He worked as a cement finisher at Holland Construction. He enjoyed many hobbies, including being on the computer, deer hunting, amateur radio operator – N8RCP, stamp collecting, scuba diving, making wine, rockets, chess, metal detecting, rocks, rockhound polished and making jewelry.

Donald is survived by his wife of 66 years, Phyllis; children, Donna Sperry, Donald (Sherri) Skorupa Jr. and Jane Barker; six grandchildren: Kami Matlock, Paul Harding, Gene Barker, Jim (Brooke) Barker, Scott (Sara) Skorupa and Stacey Skorupa; great-grandchildren: Reese and Elly Matlock, Indie, Malakai and Piper Barker and Nickolas and Jordan Skorupa; and brother, Matthew "Mac" Skorupa.

He was also preceded by his sons-in-law: Stan Sperry and Eugene Barker; and siblings: Connie Pallas, Mary Smith, Victoria Hackel, and Thomas, Wilbur, Raymond and Clifford Skorupa.

Arrangements have been entrusted to the Boyd Chapel of Pike Funeral and Cremations Service, 9191 Red Arrow Hwy., Bridgman. Online condolences accepted at www.PikeFH.com.

Dorothy Piet

July 4, 1923 – March 27, 2020

Dorothy Helen Piet, nee Nowicki, 96, of Cicero, Ill., formerly of Bangor died March 27, 2020.

She was the beloved wife of the late Louis C.; loving mother of James (the late Victoria) Piet, the late Joanne (Edward) Kwitkowski and the late John Piet; proud grandmother of Joshua, Charity, Anne, Debbie, Kathy and Matthew; great-grandmother of 10; great-great-grandmother of four; and dear sister of Tessie Szczepkowski, the late Mitchel Nowicki and the late Joan Morawa.

Interment will be in Arlington Hill Cemetery, Bangor, at 2 p.m. Wednesday, April 1. Arrangements are entrusted to Conboy-Westchester Funeral Home. For info: 708-F-U-N-E-R-A-L.

Death notices

Cheryl L. Brown, 81, of Niles died March 28, 2020, at the Chalet of Niles. Halbritter-Wickens Funeral Home, Niles, 683-3000.

Robert D. Moon Jr., 83, of Berrien Springs died March 25, 2020, at Gilead Elder Care, St. Joseph. Allred Funeral Home, Berrien Springs, 471-3729.

Dorothy H. (Nowicki) Piet, 96, of Cicero, Ill., formerly of Bangor died March 27, 2020. Conboy-Westchester Funeral Home, Westchester, Ill., (708) 562-5900.

Donald J. Skorupa Sr., 89, of Three Oaks died March 28, 2020, at Hanson Hospice Center, Stevensville. Pike Funeral Home, Boyd Chapel, Bridgman, 465-3239.

Anthony R. Tauro, 77, of Berrien Springs died March 27, 2020, at Advent Health, Zephyrhills, Fla. Allred Funeral Home, Berrien Springs, 471-3729.

James C. Grannell

Feb. 8, 1930 – March 28, 2020

James C. Grannell, 90, formerly of Benton Harbor passed away Saturday, March 28, 2020, at Thurston Woods Nursing Home in Sturgis, Mich.

Private family services were held, with a public Celebration of Life Service to be announced at a future date. Private burial took place in North Shore Memory Gardens in Coloma. Memorial donations in Jim's name may be made to the North Berrien Military Rites Team. Those wishing to sign Jim's memory book online may do so at www.starks-menchinger.com.

Jim was born Feb. 8, 1930, in Tulsa, Okla., to Raymond and Helen (Grimes) Grannell. On July 23, 1950, he married the former Lucille Steinke in Benton Harbor. Jim entered the U.S. Army and served his country overseas during the Korean War. He was employed as a supervisor for Clark Equipment Co. in Benton Harbor, retiring after 30-plus years. Jim was a former member of Grace Lutheran Church in St. Joseph. He cherished the time spent with his family, and especially enjoyed attending the grandchildren's sporting events.

Jim is survived by two sons, James (Diane) Grannell, D.O. of Niles and Robert (Ruby) Grannell of St. Joseph; six grandchildren: Justin (Alicia) Grannell, Joshua (Marissa) Grannell, Jenna Grannell, Jami Grannell, Gabriella "GiGi" Grannell and Kellie (Nick) Ruhl; four great-grandchildren, Peyton, Conner, Jade and Jaren; brother-in-law, Wilbur Steinke of St. Joseph; and several nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Lucille, in 1997; and siblings, Elva Weber, Emily Rabideau and Dean Grannell.

Trump uses wartime act but GM says it's already moving fast

By TOM KRISHER
AP Auto Writer

DETROIT — Twelve days ago, General Motors put hundreds of workers on an urgent project to build breathing machines as hospitals and governors pleaded for more in response to the coronavirus pandemic.

But President Donald Trump, claiming the company wasn't moving fast enough, on Friday invoked the Defense Production Act, which gives the government broad authority to direct companies to meet national defense needs.

Experts on managing factory production say GM is already making an extraordinary effort for a company that normally isn't in the business of producing ventilators.

"That is lightning-fast speed to secure suppliers, learn how the products work, and make space in their manufacturing plant. You can't get much faster than that," said Kaitlin Wowak, a professor at the University of Notre Dame who focuses on industrial supply chains.

GM expects to start making ventilators in mid-April, ramping up to a rate of 10,000 per month at as quickly as it can. The company is working with Ventec Life Systems, a small Seattle-area ventilator maker, and both say the Defense Production Act of 1950 doesn't change what they're doing because they're already moving as fast as they can, fronting millions in capital with an uncertain return.

"I don't think anybody could have done it faster," said Gerald Johnson, GM's global manufacturing chief.

Peter Navarro, Trump's assistant for manufacturing policy, said Saturday that invoking the act was needed because GM "dragged its heels for days" in committing to the investments to start making ventilators at an automotive electronics plant in Kokomo, Indiana.

It was only a few days earlier that Trump had been holding up GM and Ford as examples of companies voluntarily responding to the outbreak without the need for him to invoke the act. Then on Friday, he slammed GM on Twitter and during his daily briefing for foot-dragging. On Sunday, he was back to praising the company during another briefing: "General Motors is doing a fantastic job. I don't think we have to worry about them anymore."

But GM says it had been proceeding on the same course all along.

The company got into the ventilator business on March 18 after being approached by stopthespread.org, a coalition of CEOs trying to organize companies to respond to the COVID-19 disease that has already claimed more than 30,000 lives globally. The organization introduced GM to Ventec, which makes small portable ventilators in Bothell, Washington.

The automaker pulled together manufacturing experts, engineers and purchasing specialists, and the next day had people at Ventec's facility, a short distance from a nursing home where the virus killed at least 35 people.

They worked on speeding up Ventec's manufacturing. A few days later, GM assigned more engineers and purchasing experts to figure out how it could make Ventec's machines. Some Ventec parts makers couldn't produce enough widgets fast enough, so GM went to its own parts bin to find suppliers to do the job, Johnson said. At the same time, GM was shutting down its car and truck factories temporarily due to worker fears about the virus.

Erik Gordon, a University of Michigan law and business professor, said he thought Trump would commend GM and use it as an example for other manufacturers in the coronavirus fight.

"What came out was a smack on the head," he said.

Gordon, who teaches a class in commercialization of biomedical goods, said Trump likely will claim credit when GM starts making the machines. "This is an election year, and on all sides you're going to see political theater," he said.

Alex Brandon / AP

President Donald Trump speaks about the coronavirus in the James Brady Briefing Room, in Washington. Trump invoked the Defense Production Act on Friday after claiming that General Motors wasn't moving fast enough to make much-needed ventilators in response to the coronavirus pandemic. Yet experts on managing factory production say GM is already making an extraordinary effort for a company that normally isn't in the business of building ventilators.

Critics have urged Trump to invoke the Defense Production Act broadly to control the production, supply and distribution of ventilators and protective gear for hospital workers who are running short. That's what the act was meant to do, and it was not for use against a single company, Gordon said.

Even with increased production from all ventilator makers, however, the U.S. might not have enough of the life-saving machines. U.S. hospitals have about 65,000 of the ventilators that are sophisticated enough to treat critical coronavirus patients. It could probably cobble together a total of 170,000, including simpler devices, to help with the crisis, one expert says.

A doctor at the University of Nebraska Medical Center estimates that 960,000 people in the U.S. will need to be on ventilators, which feed oxygen into the lungs of patients with severe respiratory problems through a tube inserted down the throat. Doctors hope social distancing will stop a huge number of people from getting sick simultaneously, flattening the curve of the illness so they can use one ventilator to treat multiple patients.

Trump, in several appearances Friday, accused GM of promising 40,000 ventilators, then reducing the number to 6,000. He also said the company wanted higher prices than previously discussed.

Ventec, which is negotiating with the government to provide more ventilators, said it only changed numbers and prices at the request of government agencies, which asked for a range of quantities and prices. The company said it's selling the ventilators, which can treat severe virus patients, at distributor cost, and it has offered scaled down versions for a lower price.

Up until late Sunday, Ventec and GM hadn't known how many ventilators the government would buy but those details are now being worked out.

Ventec isn't sure if it will make any money on the devices, which generally sell for $18,000 – far less than ventilators used in hospital intensive care units that can cost $50,000. Johnson says GM has no intention of making a profit.

Ventec will need government money to help pay parts suppliers and ramp up its own production from 200 per month to 1,000 or more, said CEO Chris Kiple.

Invoking the Defense Production Act "shined a light" on the need for ventilators, he said, but Ventec can't move any quicker.

"We're still moving full speed ahead," Kiple said. "We know there's a shortage of ventilators."

DO YOU REMEMBER?

25 years ago - 1995

Benton Harbor Holiday Inn is operating under the name "Benton Harbor Inn" temporarily until its owners can obtain a new franchise agreement, officials said. The well-known I-94 landmark parted ways with Holiday Inn last month for reasons that the hotel management declined to discuss. The inn, which has kept its freeway sign covered for the past few weeks, is in negotiations with two to three possible franchises and may announce an agreement by spring. The inn is open for business while negotiations are under way.

35 years ago - 1985

The Lake Michigan College Board of Trustees today voted to name Dr. Anne E. Mulder of Grand Rapids Junior College as the college's new president, contingent upon working out a contrast.

Dr. Mulder, 49, is currently dean of academic services at Grand Rapids Junior College. Dr. Walter Browe, current LMC president, is retiring.

50 years ago - 1970

Bendix Automotive and Automation Company has launched a $3.8 million expansion of its disc brake production plant. The project calls for erecting a 70,000 square foot addition to the firm's hydraulics division in Lincoln Township. The project includes nearly $1 million in construction costs and more than $2.8 million in additional production equipment. The addition is scheduled for completion by Aug. 1 and will add 100 employees.

TODAY IN HISTORY

By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Today is Tuesday, March 31, the 91st day of 2020. There are 275 days left in the year.

Highlight in history:

On March 31, 1968, at the conclusion of a nationally broadcast address on Vietnam, President Lyndon B. Johnson stunned listeners by declaring, "I shall not seek, and I will not accept, the nomination of my party for another term as your President."

On this date:

In 1811, German scientist Robert Bunsen, who helped develop the Bunsen burner, was born.

In 1880, Wabash, Ind., became the first town in the world to be illuminated by electrical lighting.

In 1931, Notre Dame college football coach Knute Rockne, 43, was killed in the crash of a TWA plane in Bazaar, Kan.

In 1933, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the Emergency Conservation Work Act, which created the Civilian Conservation Corps.

In 1943, "Oklahoma!," the first musical play by Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II, opened on Broadway.

In 1975, "Gunsmoke" closed out 20 seasons on CBS with its final first-run episode, "The Sharecroppers."

In 1976, the New Jersey Supreme Court ruled that Karen Ann Quinlan, a young woman in a persistent vegetative state, could be disconnected from her respirator. (Quinlan, who remained unconscious, died in 1985.)

5-Day Forecast for St. Joseph

Today	Tonight	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Cloudy	Mostly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy	Mostly Cloudy	Few Showers
39°	31°	44° / 35°	49° / 42°	53° / 41°	50° / 42°

Local Outlook

Today we will see cloudy skies with a high temperature of 39°, humidity of 79%. Southeast wind 9 to 13 mph. Expect mostly cloudy skies tonight with an overnight low of 31°. East wind 3 to 13 mph. The wind chill for tonight could reach 30°.

Sun and Moon

Sunrise ..... 7:29 a.m.
Sunset ..... 8:10 p.m.
Moonrise ..... 11:45 a.m.
Moonset ..... 2:26 a.m.

First	Full	Last	New
4/1	4/7	4/14	4/22

Regional Map

Local Almanac

Benton Harbor Yesterday

Temperature

High	50°
Low	35°
Normal High	53°
Normal Low	33°
Record High	77° in 1998
Record Low	20° in 2014

Precipitation

Yesterday	0.00"
Month to date	1.97"
Normal for month	2.39"
Year to date	6.89"
Normal Year to date	5.56"

Air Quality

Yesterday 37
Main Offender ..... Ozone

The higher the number, the greater the need for people with respiratory problems to reduce outside activity.

0-50 ..... Good
51-100 ..... Moderate
101-150 ..... Sensitive
151-200 ..... Unhealthy

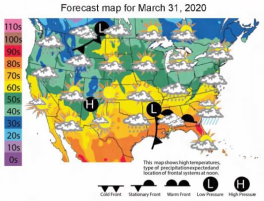
Weather Trivia

What is the coldest city in the lower 48 states?

Answer: Barrow, Alaska... where temperatures drop below zero 223 days a year.

National Weather Map

Forecast map for March 31, 2020



For latest weather updates: **www.UpdatedWx.com/HP**

Lake Michigan

Today, N wind 6 to 9 kt. Mostly cloudy. Waves around 3 ft. Water temperature 36 degrees. Tonight, N wind 5 to 10 kt. Mostly cloudy. Waves around 3 ft.

Michigan Forecast

Upper Peninsula

Today, skies will be cloudy with isolated showers, highs in the 30s and 40s. East northeast wind 3 to 7 mph. Expect partly cloudy to mostly cloudy skies Wednesday with highs in the 40s. Light winds.

Lower Peninsula

Today, skies will be cloudy with highs in the 30s and 40s. Southeast wind 9 to 13 mph. Expect mostly cloudy skies Wednesday with highs in the 40s. South southeast wind 2 to 5 mph.

WORKERS

From page A1

benefit payments from 26 to 39 weeks.

"The state of Michigan is dedicated to implementing measures to protect the health of all our residents and we understand financial health is critical as we meet this challenge together," Whitmer said in Monday's news release. "This increase and expansion of unemployment benefits will provide a measure of security for Michigan working families who lost their income due to the pandemic. We are committed to ensuring emergency financial relief for unemployed residents who continue to stay home and stay safe."

The move was made after a record 3.28 million Americans filed for unemployment benefits in the week that ended March 21.

Michigan's Unemployment Insurance Agency also developed a schedule for workers to file for benefits based on the first letter of their last name. The new filing schedule is expected to reduce the backups experienced by the historical number of Michiganders seeking unemployment in the last few weeks.

The filing schedule is broken down between online and call center filings. Those filing online are recommended to visit Michigan.gov/UIA, and those who prefer to reach the call center can call 866-500-0017.

For the new online filing schedule, workers are encouraged to go online during off-peak times between 8 p.m. and 8 a.m.

Last names beginning with letters A-L are asked to file claims on Mondays, Wednesdays or Fridays. Last names beginning with letters M-Z are asked to file claims on Sundays, Tuesdays or Thursdays.

Saturdays will be available for anyone to accommodate those who could not file during their allotted window.

For the new call center filing schedule, those with last names beginning with letters A-L are asked to call between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. on Mondays and Wednesdays.

Workers with last names beginning with letters M-Z are asked to call between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Fridays will be available for anyone to accommodate those who could not file during their allotted window.

"We continue to urge workers to apply online at Michigan.gov/UIA and to utilize our new filing schedule based on their last name," Jeff Donofrio, director of the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity, said in a news release. "UIA staff is working as hard and fast as they can to process claims and we continue to reallocate resources and upgrade technology to serve our customers."

This isn't the first change to unemployment benefits the state has pushed through the past two weeks.

When Whitmer signed the executive order last week, it did more than close non-essential businesses. The order also temporarily expanded eligibility and lifted reporting requirements for unemployment benefits.

Under the governor's order, access to benefits for unemployed workers were extended.

That meant the normal in-person registration and work search requirements were suspended.

According to Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity, the executive order expanded unemployment benefits to sick workers, workers caring for loved ones and first responders.

Workers who have an unanticipated family care responsibility – including those who have child care responsibilities due to school closures, or those who are forced to care for loved ones who become ill – have been added for unemployment benefits.

Individuals working in the public health community who become ill or are quarantined due to exposure to COVID-19 also fall under unemployment protection.

The job search

For those seeking employment opportunities in Southwest Michigan, Michigan Works employees are still at work to find people work.

As of March 24, all Michigan Works Berrien, Cass and Van Buren service centers were closed for walk-in services and shifted to providing service remotely.

Lily Brewer, executive director of Michigan Works for Berrien, Cass and Van Buren, said their centers have been fielding three times the amount of phone calls that are unemployment related.

"We are not the unemployment agency, but we give them tips to file their claim successfully," Brewer said. "What we find is individuals want to be reassured that they are not doing anything wrong."

Brewer recommended residents reach out to Michigan's Unemployment Insurance Agency to file for unemployment.

For some people, Brewer said this is a temporary layoff.

She said Michigan Works has seen a surge in temporary hirings from companies like Amazon, Meijer, Walmart and Lowe's.

"We are connecting people to what is available at the moment," Brewer said. "For example, your local grocer is having a hard time stocking their shelves. This could be a good source of income at this time. It is helping us who are still working remotely and accessing our grocery store.

"On top of the job search, we are continuing our career services," Brewer added. "Just because COVID-19 hit us, doesn't mean we have stopped all our cases."

Southwest Michigan business owners and residents can schedule a phone or virtual appointment with Michigan Works by visiting www.miworks.org or by calling 269-927-1799.

Contact: twittkowski@TheHP.com, 932-0358, Twitter: @TonyWittkowski

COVID-19

From page A1

a series of questions about their condition by a provider who will advise whether they need to seek additional care.

Lakeland is still offering a drive-up COVID-19 specimen collection site at the Center for Outpatient Services in St. Joseph to enable fast, efficient and safe testing from individuals who have a physician's order.

The BCHD will provide updates on its website, www.bchdmi.org, on social media, and at its hotline, 1-800-815-5485.

The Van Buren Cass District Health Department will provide updates on its website, www.vbcassdhd.org/covid-19.

Contact: anewman@TheHP.com, 932-0357, Twitter: @HPANewman

Gas is cheap, but there's nowhere to go

By DAVID KOENIG
Associated Press

Gillian Jones / The Berkshire Eagle via AP

Brad Downey fills up his vehicle at the Stop & Shop gas station in Pittsfield, Mass. where regular unleaded gasoline was $1.89 gallon on Monday.

DALLAS — U.S. gasoline prices have dropped to their lowest levels in four years, and they are almost sure to go lower as oil prices plunge.

Price-tracking services put the national average Monday around $2 a gallon. Some stations were spotted charging under a dollar.

But don't expect a stampede to the pumps. Demand is weak because so many Americans are under shelter-in-place rules and businesses have been shuttered because of the coronavirus outbreak.

"For most Americans who are home practicing social distancing and not driving to work or taking their children to school, you are only filling up maybe once a week, maybe every couple of weeks," said Jeanette Casselano, a spokeswoman for the AAA auto club. "You are not reaping the benefits."

Prices have plenty of room to keep falling – maybe below $1.50, according to analysts.

CASES

From page A1

growing number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in Michigan.

At a Monday press conference, Whitmer made an appeal for retired doctors and former health care practitioners to "consider coming back and helping out." The state launched a website to assemble health care volunteers at michigan.gov/fightcovid19.

"We expect a great need for additional medical support in the coming days," Whitmer said. "Please. Sign up now."

Khaldun said "there's no question" that there is a shortage of medical professionals in Michigan, including nurses and acute care physicians dealing with the highest risk patients.

"We are aggressively loosening the scope of practice laws, calling for volunteers and also are going to be looking across the state for medical professionals working in areas where they might not be as hard hit right now to perhaps volunteer," Khaldun said.

Khaldun said hospitals are expanding their capacity as the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases dramatically rises each day. As of Monday afternoon there were 6,498 COVID-19 cases in Michigan (up 1,012 from Sunday), and 52 more deaths, totaling 184.

The state is still in need of medical equipment, including ventilators and personal protective gear for health care workers, Whitmer said.

Michigan received a shipment of supplies from the Strategic National Stockpile last weekend, but the governor said it won't last long.

Michigan received 112,000 N95 masks from the national stockpile, with another 8,000 on the way, Whitmer said. However, she said one Detroit-area hospital can go through 10,000 masks in just one day.

Private businesses have assisted the state in accumulating medical supplies as well. Whitmer said the state spent $80 million to secure 20 million masks, nearly 9 million ounces of hand sanitizer, 255,000 boxes of gloves, 2.4 million gowns, more than 2000 beds 210,000 testing kits, 3,000 thermometers 185,000 face shields 22,000 cartons of disinfecting wipes and other supplies.

There's also a large need for ventilators, Khaldun said. The large and costly machines help critically ill patients who can't breathe on their own by pumping air directly into their lungs.

Khaldun said an additional 5,000 to 10,000 ventilators will be needed in the coming weeks. The state has around 1,700 right now, she said.

Michigan hospitals have begun to develop emergency policies that would be implemented in case of shortages. A policy at Henry Ford Health System states "patients who have the best chance of getting better" will be first in line to access the breathing equipment.

"We know we're on the upslope right now of cases, we know our hospitals are going to need more beds," Khaldun said. "We're going to need thousands of more ventilators and a lot of people are going to get sick."

FEMA is establishing a temporary care center at TCF Center in Detroit. Khaldun said patients who are not critically ill will be served at that facility, and other alternative treatment sites are being worked on.

Whitmer said she sent a letter to U.S. Secretary of Defense Mark Esper requesting a federal directive to build temporary hospitals with the help of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

People who aren't medical professionals can also use the state's volunteer page to find places to donate blood and supplies in their local community.

"Michigan needs you," the website states.

Whitmer's order allows medical students, physical therapists, and emergency technicians to work under the supervision of doctors as "respiratory therapist extenders" operating ventilators and performing other tasks. It also maintains several types of medical certifications that were set to expire throughout the emergency.

The order also reinforces an existing law that protects hospitals and health-care workers from liability for taking necessary steps to protect Michiganders during an emergency.

"Michigan's dedicated health care professionals continue putting their lives on the line every day during this unprecedented crisis, and we must do everything we can to empower them to do their jobs," Whitmer said.